

 Permanent
Mission
of Austria

to the United
Nations in Vienna

AUSTRIA, ITEM 4

General Exchange of Views

66th COPUOS (31 May – 9 June 2023)

Mr. Johann SPITZER, Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Chair,
Excellencies – Colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Austria fully aligns herself with the statement of the European Union, including our full solidarity and support for Ukraine and the people of Ukraine as well as the condemnation in the strongest possible terms of Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, which grossly violates international law and the UN Charter and represents a serious threat to the rules-based international order. We reiterate our call on the Russian Federation to immediately cease its hostilities. As we stated already on other occasions, it also had an impact on the functioning of space applications and casts its shadow over the international cooperation in outer space.

In addition, we would further like to highlight the following issues in our national capacity:

Let me thank you, Mr. Omran Sharaf, for chairing this Committee. And also many thanks to the UNOOSA team for preparing this session.

I would like to address the work of the Subcommittees during this cycle so far:

Austria welcomes the constructive and informative discussions in the Working Group on the Long-term sustainability of outer space activities. We have submitted a national implementation report with detailed consideration of the individual guidelines. Austria welcomes the plan to establish a repository at UNOOSA where the various contributions will be presented in an easily searchable format. This will be an important part of capacity building.

We thank the Chair of the Working Group for compiling a list of possible topics for the planned workshop in 2024, which is a very important support for organising the workshop.

We reach the halfway point of the Working Group's mandate and thus we appreciate the ideas proposed by Canada and others in preparation for the final report. However, for achieving a good structure of the final outcome of the working group, we need to continue our discussions.

Austria commends the initiative and commitment of the United States not to conduct destructive direct-ascent ASAT tests and all States who have already joined in. Austria, together with all EU Member States, supported UNGA Resolution 77/41. Moreover, Austria committed in her statement at the Conference on Disarmament on 30 March 2023 not to conduct destructive, direct-ascent anti-satellite missile testing to ensure space security and safety for all.

Austria also welcomes the in-depth discussions about Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities. It is important that the Working Group reaches agreement on its report.

Austria also supports a two-tier conference approach with a first technical part to be held in connection with the Space Resources Week in Luxembourg and a second part to be held here in Vienna. Receiving the input of a broad group of non-state stakeholders enables an open and inclusive discussion and exchange of views. This input should stimulate also the work of our Committee.

Concerning the Use of nuclear power sources in outer space, we have proposed to appoint Mr. Leopold Summerer as the new Chair of the respective Working Group and initiated all necessary administrative arrangements/ measures in this respect.

Austria supports the set-up of an Expert Group on „Dark and Quiet Skies for Science and Society“. This Group should analyse effects and mitigation measures of satellites' light pollution.

Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to say also a few words about the World Space Forum.

Last year we discussed “Sustainability in Space for sustainability on Earth”. Thanks to the initiative of the Chair of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee the contribution of space

solutions to the monitoring and implementation of the 17 UN Sustainable development goals will be mentioned in the Declaration of the SDG Summit in September 2023.

This year, the World Space Forum will focus on the contribution of space solutions to the themes of the Summit of the Future in September 2024. The Forum 2023 will take place in Vienna from 12-14 December. Initial information and registration details can be found on the UNOOSA website. We hope that this event will help to include the importance of space solutions in the planned Pact for the Future.

We welcome the proposals of the High Level Advisory Board on Effective Multilateralism in its report “A Breakthrough for People and Planet” from April 2023 for broader operational stakeholder inclusion and hope that the discussion about it and its result will contribute to ensure that the COPUOS remains at the forefront of developments.

In addition, we continue our cooperation with UNOOSA on Space4Climate Action. We will give you more information on this year’s UN/ Austria Symposium including training opportunities under item 11. A technical presentation on „Frozen Ground Monitoring from Space” will highlight the Austrian contribution to the ESA Climate Change Initiative.

Last but not least, I would also like to take this opportunity to invite you all to an Austrian side event on 6 June 2023 at 7:00 pm titled “Space Resources: Chances and legal challenges” at the University of Vienna. Please find the invitation flyer on the session website.

Let me conclude by emphasising that the Austrian delegation will continue to strongly support the work and deliberations of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subcommittees. In this sense, we are convinced that this 66th session of the Committee will be successful.

Thank you!